



If you're a veteran or the family member of a veteran, you'll find assistance and services at the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS). This state agency provides personalized assistance with filing all types of claims for federal and state veterans benefits. All DVS benefit service representatives have successfully completed VA certification training. Representatives will also represent the veteran during the claims appeal process.

Virginia veterans may qualify for care at one of the agency's two veterans care centers and burial at one of two state-operated veterans cemeteries. The Virginia Veterans Care Center, a 240-bed, long-term care facility, is located adjacent to the Salem VA Medical Center in Roanoke. The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, a 160-bed, long-term care facility is located adjacent to the McGuire Veterans Care Center in Richmond. Both facilities provide skilled nursing and Alzheimer's/dementia care, and the Virginia Veterans Care Center also provides domiciliary care.

Honorably discharged Virginia veterans and their spouses qualify for burial at either the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia or the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. Veterans receive a grave site, opening and closing of the grave for the veteran, placement of a government grave marker, and perpetual care of the grave site at no charge. Veterans' spouses and eligible dependents may be interred for a small fee, currently \$300.

DVS staff also certify that post-secondary educational institutions meet G.I. Bill funding and eligibility requirements, enabling veterans to pursue educational opportunities. Currently, more than 760 instructional programs in Virginia are approved.

For more information about these services and other benefits available to Virginia's veterans and to contact a DVS representative, visit [www.virginiaforveterans.com](http://www.virginiaforveterans.com).

*Serving those who served.*

## Events and Initiatives

### Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center Dedication Ceremony

On September 26, 2007, DVS dedicated the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC). This 160-bed facility, the second state-operated veterans care center in Virginia, will provide skilled nursing and Alzheimer's/dementia care to Virginia's veterans.

The facility is named for two Congressional Medal of Army recipients. Colonel Carl L. Sitter, USMC, Retired, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his valiant leadership during a two-day battle at Hagaru-ri, Korea. Colonel Van T. Barfoot earned the Medal of Honor during World War II near Carano, Italy when he single-handedly destroyed two German machine gun nests, took 17 prisoners, and disabled an enemy tank.

SBVCC will begin accepting residents in early December 2007.



Governor Kaine talks with Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Van T. Barfoot at the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center Dedication Ceremony



The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond

### Virginia is for Heroes Conference

Virginia's first conference addressing polytrauma and combat stress in military service personnel returning from Afghanistan and Iraq was held October 17, 2007. The conference was hosted jointly by DVS and the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Technology Transfer Center at Virginia Commonwealth University. Conference participants included health service providers, educators, employers, law enforcement and criminal justice professionals, members of the faith-based community, state and federal government representatives, the media, policy makers, veteran service organizations, nonprofit organizations, and veterans and their families. Working together, conference participants explored the issues facing returning veterans and their families and developed dozens of recommendations for improved services. A conference report will be posted on the conference website located at [www.VirginiaisforHeroes.org](http://www.VirginiaisforHeroes.org).

### Behavioral Health Care Initiative for Virginia's Veterans

DVS is proposing a Behavioral Healthcare Initiative that will establish long-term coordination of existing state and community resources and expand community capacity for case management and outpatient services for returning veterans and their families.

Working with Virginia's 40 community services boards (local public providers of mental health and substance abuse services) and the Department of Rehabilitative Services' network of community brain injury services providers, DVS recommends establishing a state-level Coordinator for Post-Deployment Services along with regional coordinators in each of the three DVS districts. Regional coordinators will be responsible for identifying veterans and their families who need long-term behavioral healthcare and rehabilitative services. They will assist with easing veterans' transitions back to their communities and will coordinate existing public and private treatment and community support resources available through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, veterans service organizations, and private sector and non-profit organizations. The coordinators will connect veterans and their families with a system of community case managers and outpatient services. In addition, the coordinators will place significant emphasis on expanding the availability of community resources by cross-training federal, state and local service providers to improve access to services and to better coordinate care for veterans and their families.

### **Workforce Development Task Force**

Multiple state and local agencies in Virginia, plus federal agencies and private sector organizations, offer career and employment-related assistance to veterans, disabled veterans, and employers. Rehabilitation, training and education programs are offered as well. However, these programs are rarely integrated or linked and little attention is given to employment of spouses and dependents of veterans. Through partnerships and utilization of existing programs, Virginia can create a single enterprise solution that provides a one-stop system for workforce development for veterans, disabled veterans, their spouses and dependents. This one-stop system can provide a full array of career development and employment-related services to all veterans, employers, and veterans interested in establishing their own businesses.

Many of the components of a seamless and comprehensive workforce development program already exist and are administered by various state and local agencies. Public Safety Secretary John Marshall is establishing the Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce to study and report on solutions that will provide an integrated workforce development solution for veterans in Virginia. The Taskforce will include federal, state and local agency representatives, private sector employers, state legislators, and veterans services organizations. A comprehensive report will be submitted to the Secretary in 2008 with recommendations for legislative and budgetary action for the 2009 session of the General Assembly.

### **Executive Order 19**

Executive Order 19, signed by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on June 16, 2006, directed DVS and other state agencies to find ways to offer new, expanded or customized services that will meet the educational, health care and social service needs of Virginia's veterans, giving special attention to disabled veterans. In addition, it directed all state agency heads to renew their commitment to giving veterans preference when hiring. On May 2, DVS submitted a report with 27 initiatives that will improve services and opportunities for Virginia's veterans. The initiatives are categorized as technology, workforce development, outreach, and quality of life. The agency is currently in the process of

initiating numerous projects to implement these recommendations. To view the full report, visit <http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/docs/EO%2019%20REPORT.pdf>.



The Virginia Veterans Cemetery at Amelia



Governor Kaine visits with residents at the Virginia Veterans Care Center in Roanoke

## **Recently Released Reports**

Long-term Care Feasibility Study: Quality Care They Earned

<http://www.wm.edu/publicpolicy/vet/vetreport.php>

Executive Order 19: Serving Virginia's Veterans

<http://www.dvs.virginia.gov/docs/EO%2019%20Rpt%20Summary.pdf>